

Government Administration and Elections (GAE)
March 4, 2022
Presented by: Bernard Thomas, Executive Director HKYO

Honorable Chairpersons Mae Flexer and Daniel Fox and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Bernard Thomas, Executive Director of Hartford Knights Youth Organization (HKYO). I am submitting this testimony to urge you to pass **both S.B. 184 and H.B. 5262** (Continuing Absentee Voting in 2022 due to COVID-19) it is extremely important to the HKYO because our organization serves families that have been affected by COVID-19 through the year and a half of remote and no school which has caused students to fall behind academically and socially. Our organization is tasked with getting the children back on track through mentorship and athletics. As a safety measure of 2020 and 2021, so as not to repeat what happened last school year, we ask that this year 2022 is allowed an extension so that parents who still fear exposure to COVID-19 can vote by absentee ballot.

Although the nation is moving towards reopening, the state of Connecticut remains cautious. Despite the threat of COVID-19 and/or any other health crisis that might arrive, access to voting should not keep voters from participating in democracy. As in 2020, 650,000 voters took their civic duty seriously while voting by absentee.

HKYO asks the committee to consider the children who were affected in the last two years, continue the safety measures of 2020 and 2021 and allow for everyone to vote by absentee ballot.

Thank you for your time and consideration, with respect,

Bernard Thomas
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